

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BAGHDA 00205 031256Z

46

ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NIC-01 CU-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07

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FM USINT BAGHDAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1691

INFO AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BAGHDAD 0205

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, IZ

SUBJ: REPORTED ARREST OF IRAQI NATIONAL FOOTBALL TEAM

1. STORY IN NOW CIRCULATING THAT MILITARY AND POLICE FOOTBALL CLUB OF IRAQ, WHICH IS DEFACTO NATIONAL TEAM, HAS BEEN PLACED UNDER ARREST EN MASSE FOLLOWING 3-0 LOSS TO KUWAIT FEB 17. ONE OF USINT LOCAL STAFF, WHO HAS A SYRIAN FRIEND ON TEAM, HAS REPORTED THAT ENTIRE SQUAD ENCARCERATED IN MADINAT ATH-THAWRA JAIL SINCE FEB 18.

2. TEAM REPORTEDLY RETURNED TO IRAQ AFTER UNPRECEDENTED LOSS TO KUWAIT, WERE ALLOWED TO RETURN HOME AS NORMAL, BUT THEN WERE ALL ROUNDED UP ON MORNING OF 18TH AND TAKEN INTO CUSTODY WHERE THEY NOW SERVING INDETERMINATE PERIOD.

3. COMMENT: WHILE IT IS POSSIBLE THERE IS ANOTHER EXPLANATION FOR INCARCERATION OF TEAM, IRAQ'S CURRENT DRIVE TO RECOGNITION AND PRESTIGE IS SO STRONG, THAT LOSS TO KUWAIT COULD BE AMPLE JUSTIFICATION.
LOWRIE

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Message Attributes

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